

## Democritus, *New York Journal*, 28 December 1787

Mr. Greenleaf, I was until lately a most violent enemy to the new Constitution; I considered it as a damnable design to reduce my countrymen to a state of vassallage; I viewed it with abhorrence and detestation; but my sentiments are totally altered. I now esteem it a perfect production, and will here unfold the reasons for my political regeneration, and hope, they will convert my deluded countrymen from their errors, and render their concurrence universal.—Know then, sir, I once thought Dr. Rushlight's assertion in the convention of Pennsylvania, *that the proposed government descended from heaven*, little better than blasphemy and impiety; I supposed it was, in other words, saying, that the devil had made a fresh eruption from hell, and became Lord Paramount of the celestial regions. But, when I reflected upon the Doctor's learning and genius, and upon the rationality of all his remarks, I concluded, that he must have some good reasons for his observation, which he did not think proper to divulge. This subject employed my greatest attention, and the more I revolved it in my mind, the more I was involved in doubt and uncertainty. Until at length, sir, I got happily extricated from the difficulty, and now am convinced of the truth of the Doctor's position.

That some people of Scotland have supernatural and prophetic visions is a fact as true as it is notorious. Might not then Mr. W—n have perceived the proposed form of government, by the power of second sight, and have known its excellent tendency to promote the public good, by his prognostic faculty? certainly he might—and, no doubt, this circumstance induced the assent of the Fœderal Convention, when he recommended it to their adoption.—This hypothesis, I will establish upon uncontrovertible grounds.

1st. Mr. W—n's conduct demonstrates the reality of his inspiration: he was previously a man of worldly knowledge, and versed in profane studies—but his behavior in the convention of Pennsylvania shews a wonderful change for the better; he speaks of the heathenish Homer and his commentators with contempt, and hints that no plan of a fœderal government was to be found in his works, though by profession a lawyer; yet he forgets a remarkable passage in Blackstone, about the trial by jury in Sweden<sup>4</sup>—while he recollects two whole lines in Sternhold and Hopkins's psalms:<sup>5</sup> this behavior evinces, that he neglected and despised his former studies, and betook himself to the perusal of pious and holy books—and, this could never have happened, unless he were under the influence of some extraordinary occurrence.

2d. The unanimity of the fœderal convention, is infallible evidence of the truth of the Doctor's position; how is it possible, that thirty-nine men should be unanimous in favor of a government, unless they were convinced of its descention from heaven.

3d. Some priests are strongly in favor of the new constitution, and not only pray, but preach for its adoption; it is conjectured, that some of them have a design to excommunicate the bible, and introduce it as a system of faith—and would it not be a solecism in language to say, that divines prize politics more than divinity?

4th. The infinite perfection of the government demonstrates its heavenly source. After having thus established, with irresistible arguments, an important fact—it behoves me to answer two objections against its certainty.

1st. It may be alledged, if it were true that Mr. W—n was, by inspiration, directed to compose the new constitution, this momentous circumstance would never have been concealed from the people: I answer, that the great modesty of the seer prevented its promulgation—and the ambition of the conventioners, which stimulated them to arrogate to themselves—a production too perfect for the work of man.

2d. It may be further remarked—that the inspiration of an attorney is extremely improbable, and too miraculous for belief—but, did not Balaam’s ass see the angel of the Lord, and save his master’s life by disobeying him? Why then might not Mr. W—n, though an attorney, have a government revealed to him? and by disobeying the instructions of his constituents, he has very probably preserved their liberty and property. So the ass and he acted precisely alike, being both influenced by preternatural causes.

O ye people of America, rest satisfied and rejoice—for ye are greatly favored—like the children of Israel—ye are blessed with a government from heaven. In imitation of the Jews, blend physician and priest together in the high-priest; place the great Doctor in the shoes of Aaron, with this single restriction, that he never set up a golden calf for the people to worship. Appoint the great attorney seer, generalissimo of the United States, and agree to the celestial constitution.

I am conscious, Mr. Greenleaf, that I shall be derided by sceptics, but I despise their derision. I have established my creed upon the rock of truth, and the man who disbelieves it, must be a disciple of Pyrrho.

DEMOCRITUS.

P. S. I hope my good friend Dr. Sawney M’Foolish, the Examiner, will not be angry with me, for employing another physician, to cure me of my madness. I am sure, he must ken vary weelee, that I know he is mickle learned in quackery, and of the twa, is the stoutest fighter for the constitution, whilk the convention did tak upon themselves to make. I am glad to see him gie baith the brute and cat a bonny downset. He needna think otherwise, but I was free frae jocularity, when I tauld him, I wud make a set of buiks from his writings, whilk wud shaw him a bennisum to the bairns of Adam; and I donna doubt, but he will be sick mickle thought of in Europe, that he will be mad—a doctor of Medicine, since he has found out so important a thing, that Solomon Gundy will throw a man into a fever; and I trust the good people of America, will be grateful, and reward him with the office of man-mid-wife to her sacred majesty, the lady Presidentess, under the new government, for his able performances in defence of it.

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